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MS. EPSTEIN: I'm Hedy Epstein and I'm speaking on behalf of the St. Louis branch of Women's International League for Peace and Freedom. We have over 200 members here in St. Louis. Many members of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom remember how in the 1950s the Atomic Energy Commission assured us that nuclear reactors would be "safe, clean and cheap." Today we face the horrible reality that they are hazardous, dirty and expensive. Let's face it, the developers of nuclear reactors really did not understand the monsters they were creating. Thus, we will pay for their ignorance and misjudgment and the government's complicity for the rest of our lives.

1 Perusal of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement, this statement here, shows how incredibly complex the Yucca Mountain repository would be. To its credit, the Department of Energy does not promise 100 percent safety. Still, the uncertainties are obvious in such statements as these that are contained in this document: "Design of the repository will continue to evolve," that's on page S-20. "The system will help retard the release of radioactive waste material to the accessible environment for long periods," page S-13. "Uncertainty in the analyses and findings," page S-30. "Some of the studies are ongoing and some of the information is incomplete," page S-30. "In the distant future ground water would contain small quantities of radionuclides and chemically toxic substances," page S-42. Therefore, we recommend that time should be taken to make very sure that no more such uncertainties exist before proceeding if you should proceed at all.

2 In 1998 the St. Louis City Board of Aldermen passed a resolution stating that St. Louis was not prepared for an accident and that nothing should move until there is a permanent burial site in operation.

According to a statement by the Attorney General's Office in Nevada, the current stockpile of spent nuclear fuel rods will require 75.8 million container miles. The transport containers will require 10,000 train loads, plus 28,000 truck loads of highly contaminated spent fuels.

All of this makes me -- makes us feel very insecure. It is not known who would be liable if there is an accident and who would be responsible for cleaning it up. Is it the fire department, the police? And accidents do happen. Witness the railroad accident in nearby Belleville, Illinois earlier this week where 15 freight cars, each carrying 130,000 pounds of coal, left the track causing a house to come off its foundation. Other concerns that we have: Should the United States amass over 70,000 metric tons of high-level radioactive waste in one location? Do we, as citizens, want trains and trucks with armed escorts carrying high-level radioactive waste on our highways and railroad tracks during the 30 years of transport involving 43 states?

3 At the very least, no shipment should occur until the earthquake-prone Yucca Mountain site has been approved and the repository has been built and is in operation. Transport risks involve accidents from fire, derailing, collisions, natural catastrophes as well as sabotage and terrorism.

4 Because St. Louis is centrally located, it is on several of the proposed train and truck routes, and that's on the maps indicated on page S-22 and S-23. It is estimated that shipments would travel through St. Louis on an average of every other day for 30 years. 79 of the 103 operating commercial nuclear power reactors are located east of the Mississippi River. Therefore, we suggest that before proceeding -- if at all -- with shipments, routes through unpopulated areas which bypass large cities be developed.

We want to remind the Commission that the Nuclear Waste Policy Act requires the Commission to adopt a final Environmental Impact Statement to the extent practicable as part of the Commission's decision making license application.

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In conclusion, I just want to simply state that the information contained in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement clearly demonstrates how hazardous and insecure the entire process of disposal of spent nuclear fuel and high-level radioactive waste is, beginning with the containers through transportation and final repository. Thank you very much.